

Message Text

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22-C
ACTION PER-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: APER, AFSP, BGEN, SA
SUBJECT: ETA OF NEW CONSULAR OFFICER

REF: DHAHRAN 0632, DHAHRAN 0411, STATE 130030

1. PREFACE AND SUMMARY: REF DEPTTEL NOTIFIED POST THAT DEPARTMENT CANNOT FILL RECENTLY ESTABLISHED SECOND CONSULAR POSITION UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1 - A DATE SIX WEEKS AWAY. TELGRAM GAVE NO ASSURANCE THAT POSITION WOULD EVEN BE FILLED IN SEPTEMBER AND WE HAVE RECEIVED NO NOTIFICATION SUBSEQUENTLY OF THE SELECTION OF AN FSO FOR THE POSITION. PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO REQUEST READING FROM DEPARTMENT WHEN IT NOW EXPECTS TO FILL POSITION AND TO AGAIN STRESS IMPORTANCE POST PLACES ON EARLY FILLING OF SECOND CONSULAR POSITION. IN SUMMARY, CONSULAR WORKLOAD HAS COME TO DOMINATE ACTIVITY AT THIS POST, WITH VERY LITTLE TIME LEFT OVER FOR SUBSTANTIVE REPORTING AND TRADE PROMOTION. DECLINE OF LATTER ACTIVITY MOST FRUSTRATING AS CONGEN IS DESIGNATED AS COMMERCIAL INTEREST POST AND WE WISH TO SPARE NO EFFORT TO INCREASE US PARTICIPATION IN THE BOOM GROWTH MARKET WHICH AMERICAN EXPORTERS CAN FIND IN THIS CONSULAR DISTRICT. END SUMMARY.

2. OUR REFTELS PROVIDE STATISTICAL PICTURE OF EXPANDING CONSULAR WORKLOAD, AND IT WAS ON THAT BASIS POST JUSTIFIED REQUEST FOR SECOND CONSULAR POSITION AND DEPARTMENT AGREED TO ITS ESTABLISHMENT. CONSULAR WORKLOAD CONTINUES TO GROW AND WE SEE NO SIGN THAT IT IS EVEN NEARING A NEW HIGHER PLATEAU. FOR EXAMPLE, POST'S PREVIOUS MONTHLY RECORD FOR VISA INSSUANCES WAS 316. IN FIRST 20 DAYS OF
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JULY, 1976, POST ISSUED 355 VISAS.

3. STATISTICS PORTRAY ONLY ONE CRITICAL AREA OF POST'S CONSULAR WORKLOAD PICUTRE. WHAT CANNOT BE SO PRECISELY MEASURED IN A NEAT TABULAR FORM ARE THE OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE CONSULAR SECTION. FOR EXAMPLE, LAST WEEK THE FOOLOWING SPECIAL CONSULAR SERVICES WERE HANDLED BY POST'S CONSULAR SECTION:

(A) CAPTAIN ON AMERICAN SHIP ANCHORED OUTSIDE DAMMAM PORT RADIOED POST FOR ASSISTANCE IN DEALING WITH TWO SEAMEN WHO ASSAULTED SHIP-MATE AND ULTIMATELY REQUIRED REPATRIATION TO US. AS CASE BECAME MORE SERIOUS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES BECAME INVOLVED, POST'S ONLY CONSULAR OFFICER WAS DRAWN AWAY FROM HIS OFFICE FOR TOTAL OF 16 HOURS OVER FOUR DAYS TO HANDLE DIFFICULT CASE.

(B) DEPARTMENT, ON RESPONSE TO WHITE HOUSE INQUIRY, REQUESTED POST TO DETERMINE HEALTH AND CONDITION OF AMCIT WHO, ON HIS WAY TO DHAHRAN, HAD ALTERCATION WITH ATHENS POLICE. BY TIME AMCIT LOCATED, INTERVIEW COMPLETED, AND CABLE WRITTEN (SEE DHAHRAN 0895), 4 1/2 HOURS WERE ABSORBED.

(C) AS WEEK ENDED, POST WAS REQUIRED TO HANDLE DEATH CASE WHICH HAD TO BE CARRIED OVER INTO CURRENT WEEK (CURRENT WEEK PRODUCED TWO MORE DEATH CASES TO ADD TO CONSULAR WORKLOAD). DEATH CASES ARE VERY TIME CONSUMING AS SAUDI SYSTEM IS NOT STRUCTURED TO PERMIT PROMPT PROCESSING OF PAPERWORK, SHIPMENT OF REMAINS TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OR COLLECTION OF PERSONAL EFFECTS TO BE SENT TO NEXT OF KIN.

(D) AS USUAL, DURING WEEK OTHER SPECIAL CONSULAR SERVICES FELL WAY OF CONSULAR OFFICER. TWO AMCITS ON SEPARATE DAYS CALLED TO DISCUSS DISPUTES THEY ARE HAVING WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS. ONE DIS-TRAUGHT MOTHER ENGAGED CONSULAR OFFICER IN PROLONGED DISCUSSION CONCERNING HER SON WHO HAD BEEN MOLESTED. CONSULAR OFFICER, AS CUSTOMARY EACH WEEK, WAS REQUESTED TO ASSIST NEWLY-ARRIVED AMCIT ESTABLISH HIS TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS BEFORE SAG LABOR OFFICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SAUDI LABOR LAWS.

4. TO HANDLE CONSULAR WORKLOAD, ACTING PRINCIPAL OFFICER WAS REQUIRED TO ENGAGE IN CONSULAR WORK AS HE IS ONLY OTHER OFFICER AT POST WITH CONSULAR COMMISSION. APO, WHO ALSO SERVES AS CHIEF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ECON/CML SECTION AND IS ASSUMING MANY ADMIN RESPONSIBILITIES UNTIL NEW ADMIN OFFICER ARRIVES, COULD PERMIT HIMSELF TO DEVOTE TIME TO ONLY ROUTINE COMMERCIAL WORK. SUBSTANTIVE REPORTING DURING WEEK WAS CONSEQUENTLY REDUCED TO ZERO AND OVERDUE TRADE PROMOTION SURVEYS AND REPORTS COULD NOT BE UNDERTAKEN.

5. FINALLY, FROM STANDPOINT OF OVERALL OPERATION OF CONSULAR SECTION AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF OFFICER SERVING AS POST'S

ONLY CONSULAR OFFICER, SITUATION IS PERPLEXING AND DIFFICULT. CONSULAR OFFICER OPERATES AS MAN PUTTING OUT FIRES WITH NO TIME PERMITTED TO ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS AND BETTER ORGANIZE HIS OFFICE, MUCH LESS TO DO EVEN THE BASIC READING TO WHICH FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER IN FIELD SHOULD DEVOTE TIME. LONGER TERM PROBLEMS AND PROJECTS MUST BE SHOVED COMPLETELY ASIDE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE MOLESTATION CASE CITED ABOVE IS NOT ISOLATED EXAMPLE AND TIME SHOULD BE SPENT WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO BRING THE SITUATION TO THEIR ATTENTION AND STAFF OUT PROCEDURES TO MAKE RESIDENT AMCITS MORE AWARE OF PROBLEM AND HOW TO HANDLE MATTER WITH CIVIL SUTHORITIES IF THEY WISH TO PREFER CHARGES. IN NEW INDUSTRIAL CITY OF JUBAIL WE HAVE HEARD OF ONE CASE WHERE AMCIT MANAGER WAS THROWN IN JAIL FOR NIGHT BY LOCAL POLICE WHEN SAUDI EMPLOYEE LODGED COMPLAINT THAT HE HAD BEEN FIRED WITHOUT CAUSE. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEND CONSULAR OFFICER TO JUBAIL TO "SHOW THE FLAG" AND MAKE IT CLEAR TO POLICE THAT SUCH ARBITRARY, UNREASONABLE ARRESTS OF AMCITS SHOULD NOT OCCUR IN FUTURE (AS WELL THEY MIGHT WITH US COMPANIES STARTING TO LOCATE THERE). PRESENT STAFFING PATTERN OF POST DOES NOT PERMIT THAT COURSE OF ACTION. ALSO, SAG HAS PROCEDURE IN FORCE WHICH REQUIRES PERSONAL EFFECTS OF DECEASED FOREIGNER HERE WITHOUT FAMILY TO BE COLLECTED AND SOLD AT PUBLIC AUCTION. POST NEEDS TO HAVE CONSULAR OFFICER CONCENTRATE ON PROBLEM AND DEVELOP WORKING ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY PERSONAL PROPERTY OF DECEASED AMCITS ARE AUTOMATICALLY HANDED OVER TO CONSULAR OFFICER AS MATTER OF COURSE. AGAIN, TIME AND STAFF DOES NOT ALLOW POST TO PURSUE MATTER.

7. FOR ADDITIONAL VIEW OF POST'S CONSULAR WORKLOAD PROBLEM, VISA OFFICE OFFICIAL LOUIS GOELZ RECENTLY INSPECTED CONSULAR SECTION AND EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT WORKLOAD OF SECTION WARRANTS PROMPT FILLING OF SECOND COSULAR POSITION. HE FURTHER RECOMMENDED ESTABLISHMENT OF A THIRD FSL POSITION IN CONSULAR SECTION TO HELP COPE WITH RAISING TIDE OF CONSULAR WORK.

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8. FOREGOING, HOPEFULLY, PROVIDES DEPT WITH CLEARER PICTURE OF HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO OPERATION OF POST THAT OUR VACANT CONSULAR POSITION BE FILLED QUICKLY. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF DEPARTMENT WOULD PROVIDE FRESH ADVICE AS TO WHEN IT PLANS TO ASSIGN NEW CONSULAR OFFICER TO DHAHRAN. WHILE WE WISH HE WERE HERE TODAY, SEPTEMBER IS REASONABLE ETA. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO CONTINUE BEYOND THAT TIME OUR CURRENT PRACTICE OF CURTAILING OTHER IMPORTANT WORK ON ORDER TO HANDLE BURGEONING CONSULAR WORKLOAD.
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